

AMENDED CLAIM SET:

1. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose~~ Cellulose triacetate ~~which is soluble in an organic solvent and has a substituent consisting essentially of an acetyl group and further has a carboxyl group and a sulfonic acid group and contains alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, wherein said cellulose triacetate has compound obtained by the reaction of a cellulose, which may contain a hemicellulose, with a reactant consisting essentially of acetic anhydride in the presence of a sulfuric acid catalyst and having at least one feature selected from the group consisting of the following features (i), (ii), and (iii):~~

(i) ~~said cellulose triacetate compound has carboxyl groups wherein at least part of the carboxyl groups in said cellulose triacetate are free carboxyl groups;~~

(ii) ~~said cellulose triacetate compound contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid; and~~

(iii) ~~said cellulose triacetate compound contains an the alkali metal or an the alkaline earth metal, wherein are present in said cellulose triacetate in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate is 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent;~~

~~wherein said cellulose triacetate compound is soluble in an organic solvent.~~

2. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (iii), wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate is 2.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

3. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 2, wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate is 1×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

4. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the acid has a pKa value of 2.0 to 4.4.

5. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of an aliphatic monocarboxylic acid, an aliphatic polycarboxylic acid, a hydroxycarboxylic acid, and an amino acid.

6. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 5, wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of a saturated or unsaturated C₁₋₃ monocarboxylic acid, a saturated or unsaturated C₂₋₄ dicarboxylic acid, a C₁₋₆ hydroxycarboxylic acid, and an amino acid.

7. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 6, wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one member selected from

the group consisting of formic acid, haloacetic acid, halopropionic acid, acrylic acid, malonic acid, succinic acid, glutaric acid, fumaric acid, glycolic acid, lactic acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, and citric acid.

8. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is 1×10^{-9} to 3×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate.

9. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 8, wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is 1×10^{-8} to 2×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate.

10. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 9, wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is 1×10^{-7} to 1×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate.

11. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound comprising the cellulose triacetate compound of Claim 1 in the form of a slurry, wherein the slurry has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0.

12. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 11, wherein the slurry has a pH of 4.8 to 6.0.

13. (currently amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to

Claim 1, wherein the average degree of acetylation is from 58 to 62.5%.

14. – 17. (cancelled).

18. (currently amended) A dope containing the cellulose triacetate compound according to of Claim 1 and an organic solvent.

19. (cancelled).

20. (previously presented) A method for improving the releasability of a film from a support which comprises casting a dope of Claim 18 on the support.

21. (cancelled).

22. (cancelled)

23. (previously presented) A dope according to Claim 18, wherein said organic solvent comprises a halogenated hydrocarbon.

24. (cancelled).

25. (cancelled).

26. (new) The cellulose triacetate of claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the total content of an alkali metal and alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of said cellulose triacetate is an effective amount or more not interfering with heat resistance of the cellulose triacetate.

27. (new) The cellulose triacetate of claim 1, wherein said cellulose triacetate is insoluble in water.